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ABSTRACT

The current growth of interest in intercultural communication skills may be poorly directed. Unlike TESOL programs, bilingual and intercultural communication programs are designed to promote knowledge and experience in more than one language culture. Bilingual education's transformation into a program directed not at promoting true bilingualism, but at a "problem" group of nonnative speakers should serve as a warning to intercultural communication programs. The targets of such education should not be seen as problem people; indeed, Americans may be more in need of intercultural communications skills than members of other groups. Some research in bilingualism indicates that our initial predispositions toward positive effects of intercultural communication training must be tempered by a willingness to grapple with potentially negative effects as well. More good research in linguistics and in the acculturation process is also needed to create a firmer basis for choosing among various potential pedagogies. Armed with accurate knowledge and training, people in the field of intercultural communication will be uniquely positioned to contribute to bilingual and TESOL programs as well. (JL)

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An Appraisal of Language and Communication Skills in Contemporary Education: Exploring Mutual Concerns of Bilingual Education, TESOL, and Intercultural Communication

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Without attempting to date the "beginning" of intercultural communication education in comparison with TESOL or bilingual education programs, it is worth noting that TESOL and bilingual education programs has become widespread in contemporary education.[1] Intercultural communication education is comparatively new. While the growth of intercultural communication in the general communication studies curriculum is well documented,[2] it is only in the last few years that such programs have become focused increasingly on the development of intercultural communication skills. Examples of such programs include the conversant program at Penn State University,[3] the program for training non-native graduate students in communication skills at Texas Tech University,[4] and the intercultural communication workship program at the University of Minnesota.[5] These programs provide practical orientation to the process of intercultural communication education by pointing to specific intercultural skills that should be taught as well as by providing suggestions for creating appropriate communicative environments from which to teach such skills. The most recent issue of Communication: The Journal of the Communication Association of the Pacific is devoted to the topic "Teaching Communicative Competencies to Second Language Learners" and it contains several articles dealing with the teaching of communication to non-American speakers.[6] I will deal with some of of this advise later in considering directions for intercultural communication pedagogy, and research. Here it is important to recognize that the focus of the journal marks the emergence of a vital concern in our discipline. This concern with the development of communication skills of non-native speakers is a natural outgrowth of increased immigration to the United States, increased international contact in business, and increasing

enrollments of international students on American college campuses.[7] In addition to being recognized within our discipline, groups such as the National Association of Foreign Student Affairs,[8] and TESOL instructors[9] certainly have observed the need for increased attention to verbal communication skills. Given the development then of a burgeoning interest in intercultural communication skills, it seems fruitful to examine some current concerns in bilingual education and TESOL programs generally. Considerable research, conceptual inquiry and public controversy have provided a wealth of information concerning intercultural education in American society. As a result several issues emanating from this body of literature should be of interest to practictioners of communication education generally and intercultural communication education in particular. What emerges from this literature, as I see it, are several indications that the current growth of interest in intercultural communication skills may well be poorly directed. Ultimately, while it may provide positions of assistant professors and quick articles for practitioners on the way to tenure, promotion or merit increases the bandwagon may well be rolling toward an unbalanced schema of uni-cultural pedagogy. Here we must consider the experience of bilingual education.

Bilingual education and, I believe, intercultural communication education programs differ greatly from TESOL in at least one important respect (beyond the concern in the former programs with factors other than language). TESOL programs focus on the teaching of English to non-native speakers. They provide a unidirectional training program. Students generally are motivated to learn English and the TESOL program provides formal training in that endeavor. Bilingual education programs and intercultural communication pro-

grams are, at least ideologically, designed to promote knowledge and experience in more than one language or culture. The underlying notion behind the endeavors is that there is value in becoming "bilingual" or "multicultural".[10] The goal generally is not to promote one particular culture (in this case the dominant American culture) over others and certainly most of us do not desire to stamp out every vestage of heterogeneity or create a homogeneous "Ronald McDonald" society. Yet, the experience of bilingual education suggests that great caution needs to be taken to attempt to create rewarding intercultural learning on the part of participants.

Bilingual education in the United States today[11] has been subject to a number of popular misconceptions. One of the worst of these is the notion that bilingual edcuation leads to a maintenance of minority languages, with a concurrent stifling of English language learning. The argument is most often, I think, made concerning Spanish and data indeed show that the number of monolingual Spanish-speakers in the United States is increasing. In his now classic study of the Spanish-speaking population in Los Angeles, however, Lopez found that the increase in Spanish-speakers in due largely to the arrival of new immigrants.[12] He presented convincing evidence that Spanish-speaking immigrants in American society follow pattern typical of European and Asian groups: by the third generation eighty-four percent use mostly English with the rest using both languages. And what of bilingual education? Other research indicates that whenever you bring hispanics and and Anglos together in a school, Spanish usually learn some English but Anglos do <u>not</u> learn Spanish. Indeed, Einar Haugen, a prominent scholar in the speciality of bilingualism notes that bilingual education was initally

perceived as a mechanism for promoting bilingualism, but it soon became a program directed largely at the so-called "problem" group of non-native speakers.[13] Other writers contend that bilingual education may ultimately lead to a reduction of bilingualism among Hispanic Americans.

The potential implications for intercultural communication programs should not be taken lightly. This analysis suggests that intercultural communication skills programs ought not become vehicles for intercultural rape. Nor should the intercultural communication skills program become a "bonehead" communication course designed exclusively for so-called problem people, though we may well wish to design special courses, workshops or training sessions for those people in addition or as a supplement to a truely intercultural program. Indeed, it may well be that our "normal" American people are more in need of intercultural communication skills than members of other groups if only because the Americans have less experience with other cultures than do immigrants or sojourners in the United States. At this stage my argument may seem to be an assault on a straw man in the sense that most intercultural communication scholars respect cultural heterogeneity or pluralism. At the same time, the experience of bilingual education suggests that this straw man may become very real indeed as our concern with intercultural communication skills continues to grow. It is worth noting too that all of the articles in the newest issue of Communication focus appropriately on non-native speakers and on ways of teaching them to communicate in American society while none focus on the teaching of intercultural communication skills to American or on the development of multi-cultural skills. A balanced focus, is not required in every article of course. I merely suggest that at some point our emphasis on the acquisition of new behaviors

should be concerned also with ways in which valued communication behaviors might be maintained among immigrant groups or international student groups or even among Americans seeking to become multicultural.

Similarly, some research on bilingualism conducted by Lambert and his associates at McGill University suggests that we need to be concerned with both positive and potentially negative effects of intercultural communication training. These studies indicate that at least, in the short run, total immersion in another culture and language can lead to increased anomie, negative evaluation of oneself and one's culture.[14] Our initial predispositions toward positive effects of intercultural communication training must be tempered by a willingness to study and attempt to grapple with potentially negative effects as well.

Bilingual education programs and TESOL programs maintain at least one advantage over contemporary work in intercultural communication in that in the study of language, linguistic competence and linguistic skill, there is considerable research from which to draw pedagogical implications. The current concern with communicative competence, particularly with regard to the acquisition of communicative behaviors by non-native speakers is an area which has not been well researched. In particular, while some writers are now distinguishing between communicative competence and communicative skill or expertise and while some have involked the competence/performance distinction following Chomsky in linguistics,[15] there have been few attempts to examine this phenomenon empirically or in intercultural settings.[16] It seems to me that the ultimate advances in our knowledge of intercultural learning will accrue only with good research on the fundamental processes of acquisition. For example, we do not know what communication behaviors

are best acquired by processes of formal teaching or which are best acquired by the process of interaction apart from formal training. Thus we have little basis to choose among various potential pedagogical techniques. Finally, we have not yet well described the communication patterns and rules of American culture or any culture for that matter. Of course, we have made some headway but our ability to describe communication systems is not nearly as complete as our ability to describe "language". Hence it is more difficult to know specifically which behaviors to "teach" members of different cultural groups.[17] Some general patterns may emerge by asking "learners" where they are having problems. Some international students on American college campuses suggest the following: knowledge of American slang and idioms, knowledge of English, lack of contact with Americans, listening comprehension, conversation training for everyday situations, knowledge of how to initiate conversation with Americans, getting Americans to provide corrective feeback, knowledge of American values, knowledge concerning everyday topics, giving oral reports in class, participating in class discussion, understanding lectures, taking notes, adapting socially on campus and finding companionship with the opposite sex.[18] Research on acculturation processes and intercultural communication suggest a wide range of additional categories: perception and thought processes, coping with unfamiliar situations, coping with culture shock, etc.[19] This list is hardly exhaustive and while it provides an array of areas for instruction however, the need to know more about basic communication behaviors ultimately must be a central concern of intercultural communication education.

Despite the need for more research on communication behaviors and how such behaviors are acquired, it remains that scholars concerned with communi-

cation education generally have much to contribute to the development of intercultural communication skills. The training and concern with skills in communication make people in our field uniquely positioned to contribute to bilingual education and TESOL programs as well. Each of these areas of endeavor has increasingly recognized the impact of verbal communication in language/cultural learning. The task remains for communication scholars to form interdisciplinary and cooperative relationships with other programs to promote improved intercultural communication in both the pluralistic society and the global village.

[1] Einar Haugen "Bilingualism, Language Contact and Immigrant Languages in the United States" Current Trends in Linguistics 10 (1973) 505-591.

[2] Michael J. Schneider, William J. Jordan, John F. Deethardt, Margaret L. McLaughlin and Michael J. Cody "An Assessment of the Communication Needs of International Students," Speech Education: Journal of the Communication Association of the Pacific 7 (1979), 13-20.

[3] Thomas Buckingham and Lawrence B. Rosenfield, "The Conversant Program and the Development of Communicative Competence," Communication Education 27 (1978), 349-354.

[4] Schneider et.al.

[5] William B. Gudykunst and Tsukasa Nishida, "The Intercultural Communication Workshop: Foundation, Development and Affects," Communication 12 (1978), 72-92.

[6] Communication 10 (1981).

[7] See Schneider et.al.

[8] National Association of Foreign Student Affairs, "Report of ESL Consultation," mimeographed, Texas Tech University, July 1978.

[9] Gillian Brown "Understanding Spoken Language" TESOL Quarterly 12 (1978) 271-283.

[10] John Lum "Marginality and Multiculturalism: Another Look at Bilingual/ Bicultural Education" Culture Institute Learning Report 5 (1977).

[11] A Better Chance to Learn: Bilingual-Bicultural Education, United States Commission on Civil Rights Clearinghouse Publication No. 51, May, 1975.

[12] David Lopez "Chicano Language Loyalty in an Urban Setting," Sociology and Social Research 62 (1978), 267-278.

[13] Haugan.

[14] See Wallace Lambert and Elizabeth Peal "The Relation of Bilingualism to Intellingence" Psychological Monographs 76:27 (entire issue) and Wallace Lambert, G. Richard Tucker and Alison d' Anglejar "Cognitive and Attitudinal Consequences of Bilingual Education" Journal of Educational Psychology 65 (1973), 141-159.

[15] Michael J. Schneider Cross-Cultural Communication and the AcQuisition of Communicative Competence, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, 1979; James C. McCroskey "Communicative Competence and Performance: A Research and Pedagogical Perspective" Communication Education 31 (1982), 1-7.

[16] See Schneider, 1979.

[17] Michael J. Schneider "Verbal and Nonverbal Indices of the Communicative Performance and Acculturation of Chinese Immigrants" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society For International Education, Training and Research, March, 1980.

[18] Schneider, et.al. 1979, also, Seth Spaulding and Michael J. Flack The World's Students in the United States: A Review and Evaluation of Research on Foreign Students (New York: Praeger, 1976) p. 47-48.

[19] See, for example, Richard W. Brislin Cross-Cultural Encounters (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982).